

[Sailor on Shore Leave]

Blasphemy in this Should [?] its use [?] Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK 18 Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130 Street

DATE May 15, 1939

SUBJECT A Sailor on Shore Leave

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 [Wes t?] 130 Street

DATE May 15, 1939

SUBJECT A Sailor on Shore Leave

"What time is it, lady?"

"Four o'clock, sailor."

"Jesus Christ! It's late as hell!"

"What's the rush?"

"How far's the river, lady—gotta be there by 4:15."

"O, you'll make it. Three blocks over. From the Fleet, eh?"

"Yeh, lady. I got 24 hours shore leave, an' now I'm runnin' back to the tub."

"Not much leave, huh?"

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"Nope, not much. I wuz havin' one swell time. Enjoyed m'self like all hell, an' now I gotta beat it back. Some stuff, eh?"

"What for—on duty?"

"Duty? You said it, Miss, duty, hell! Gotta beat it back to the galley and rustle up a mess uv food for them officers; I'm late as all glory now. [W otta?] break! Here we been offa shore for weeks beatin' it up an' down the coast from Canada to the News an' now this here one chance to git your feet on dry land—an' New Yawk t'boot—this here chance is gotta be busted up by shovlin' mess to them there officers. Justice, hell! There ain't none!"

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"Tough, huh? Seen much here?"

"Yeh, tough. Yeh; I been at the World's Fair the first day. We got passes, we guys. Some show, all right. We git ourselves some eyeful. Yessir. Took in the town, too; some big place."

"If you don't mind my asking you, where do you come from?"

"Oh, down in some two by four town down in South Carolina."

"What made you / take to the Fleet?{##?}"

"What [kindyou?] do? Me, a young guy lookin' for wuk when they ain't none gets borin', t'say the least. They ain't any [w uk?] to be had in them small towns an' I didn' want my folks to start supportin' a big guy like me, so I went off from home an' hitched into Charleston. Charleston's a big town an' I had hopes t'git some wuk, but I sure was fooled. They ain't no wuk, 'specially for us folk that's got cullud skin, so I git the idea of hikin' over to the Navy Yard over to Newport News an' looked around. Havin' a coupla cents left ain't no fun so I flopped into the recruitin' office an' here I am. Hunger's a funny thing.

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Makes you do funny things. It ain't so bad, gen'rally speakin', but I'd like to do sumthin' commercial like—yeh, lady, in industry.”

“Have you been in New York before?”

“Yeh, once; a coupla years ago. Been traipsin' aroun' on these tubs from Panama up the coast an' over to Europe an' the Pacific.”

“Been down to the West Indies much?”

“Yeh, I been down there plenty atimes. I been over to Puerto Rico an' Haiti, an' Trinidad. No, I ain't ever been over to Jamaica yit but I been over to the Virgin Islands. Pardon me, lady—excuse me—but it always strikes me funny. Only one trouble 'bout then Virgin Islands—They ain't no virgins there. Nope, they's all married in St. Thomas.

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No virgins there—maybe outside atown, but none in St. Thomas.——We were gonna go to Europe, but on account of the crisis no Europe now. Hope I make that there launch.——Thanks, lady, so long—thanks a lot.——